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LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS. EUCOM FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/27/2016

TAGS: PREL PGOV PREF MOPS CD

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON CHADIAN REBEL OFFENSIVE

REF: N'DJAMENA 1360

Classified By: Poloff John O'Leary. Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

¶1. (U) Mahamat Nouri, leader of the United Front for Democracy and Development (UFDD), told BBC that rival rebel forces (read Timan Erdimi's RaFD/SCUD) were located in Kanem Region northeast of Moussoro (13,39 N; 16,29 E) about 200 Km from N'Djamena. The Chadian Defense Minister denied Nouri's claim, and the Embassy has no information to confirm that a large rebel force may be in the Moussoro area.

¶2. (C) Nouri also told BBC that his forces are located in the vicinity of Abeche (13,49 N; 20,49 E). Emboff in Abeche reported UNHCR observation that Chadian National Army (ANT) vehicles were heading toward Am Zoer (14,13 N; 21, 23 E), which is northeast of Abeche. UNHCR also noted ANT helicopter activity near Am Zoer. Nouri reportedly said he is hesitant to move because he is under air surveillance, but he hopes to make slow progress toward N'Djamena.

¶3. (C) Limited flights into and out of Abeche have resumed, and UNHCR plans to resume full humanitarian services for refugee camps. The French are still urging international civilians to remain at the French base due to the proliferation of citizens with arms in Abeche (including prisoners reportedly released from Abeche jail); but, if they choose to leave, the French are asking them to sign waivers. There are reports that 50 to 60 ANT soldiers were admitted to Abeche hospital with injuries.

¶4. (C) The IMF and the IBRD have suspended operations in Chad, and IBRD has temporarily moved staff to Maroua in Cameroon. ExxonMobil has consolidated its American staff of 117 in Kome (8,36 N; 16,26 E).

¶5. (U) The French have told their citizens to resume normal activity but remain vigilant.

¶6. (C) The Embassy held an EAC at 1600. Amcits were advised to circulate with caution and observe a 2100 curfew. The Ambassador also hosted a Town Meeting at his residence at 1700 hours. Tomorrow, 11/28, is a Chadian holiday; and the Embassy will be closed. Staff will continue to monitor the situation, however; and the EAC will reconvene at 1600 hours.

¶7. (U) Tripoli minimize considered.

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